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PHILIP THE SECOND.

LONDON :
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PHILIP THE SECOND.

A Tragedy.

BY

N. T. MOILE.

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT;
AND
B. KIMPTON, 43, HIGH HOLBORN.

1849.



PHILIP THE SECOND.

A Tragedy.

CHARACTERS.

PHILIP.

CARLOS.

GOMEZ.

PEDRO.

ISABEL.

**THE GRAND INQUISITOR, COUNSELLORS AND
GUARDS.**

THE PROLOGUE.



'Tis sweet in meads a bosky brook divides,
That spreads it's mirror to the mountains' sides—
Whence, oh my soul, and whither wouldst thou climb?
The path is steep, the precipice sublime,
And based in bones of who aspired and fell:
And on the height, where columns crown a cell,
What, but a cenotaph, with garlands carved,
For those who gained the summit, and were starved?
'Tis sweet by headlands, that o'erlook the sea,
And face the sun—Come, sit beneath with me!
Yon ship has harnessed winds to plough the deep:
Bright are their pinions as the cloud they sweep;
Chariots that fulmine far the deck endorse,
And steam wheels onward with a thousand horse;
But storm with more already metes her way,
And yawning quicksands bellow for their prey.

Happy, who hears of wreck the stronger share,
Or wonders at a work 'tis death to dare!
Drain thou the hive, nor envy those that filled.
'Tis better thrift to buy, than breed or build.

“ Yet what is life? The sun forever burns
Undimmed; undimmed the quire of night returns—
Those countless spheres, whose symphonies intone
In radiant cycles round their Maker's throne;
And morn and eve, in many coloured robe,
The hymn perpetuate as they gird the globe:
But earthly fires, that imitate divine,
Burn to consume, and kindle ere they shine.
The song, whose echo dies upon the breeze—
The shadow of a cloud that flecks the seas;
The rustling waves of wheat with golden ears;
The snow-flake fluttering till it lights in tears;
The ripple on the lake, where zephyrs run,
That sport, as purrs a kitten in the sun;
The smile from woman's cheek, the blush, that flies;
The winecup's flavour; smoke that scales the skies;

Spring's genial warmth; the scent of orange shades—
Whate'er exists—a moment flowers, and fades :
Yet serves a while the great Taskmaster's will :
Which I too work, or perish to fulfil.

“ Are all earth's charms addressed to man alone?
Whose taste then greeted them ere man was known?
When, rocks bear witness, order reigned on earth,
And grace wooed eyes to brighten at her worth.
As still she woos, in far and lonely seas,
When the moon's path or morning's meets the breeze;
In Afric glens, where leopards lick their brood ;
Or where old oaks o'erlook Australia's wood.
If mortals sleep, do meteors light forbear?
Man never reached the pole, but God is there.
And where are not his witnesses to worth,
The all-seeing sun, all-sounding air, and earth?
Inanimate rocks in conscious calm may rest,
And, while they share no labours, all attest :
The electric powers, that all creation chain,
May give it all each thought they give the brain ;

As streams reflect man's image to his eye,
And cliffs and deserts to his voice reply ;
Or communes with his heart a landscape fair
As paradise when angels fann'd the air :
Landscape, where hills and rivers vie to please :
Wide o'er whose heights and vallies, isles and trees,
As sunbeams clothe the grass, or dew the flowers,
Great spirits of the past have pitched their bowers :
On whom is flashed each sally of our soul,
As their's still lightens from it's lettered scroll :
With whose our intellect shall merge, and range
O'er all earth's phases, till the next great change ;
Like heat, to penetrate whate'er exists,
And pass like wind, that passes where it lists."

A dream, alas ! a shade, a shape of air,
A wrecker's lamp, a Syren's song—Beware !
My soul, ah whither wouldst thou wing with me,
As a white bird at evening soars to sea ?
But prove thy pinion first, explore a path,
Nor tempt the midway air with winds in wrath !

THE PROLOGUE.

7

Swift and resistless through the starry quire,
Lo! where yon comet mounts with train of fire:
From earth so sallying through the quires of song
Soared Alfieri sunward, bright and strong.
Go, scan the secret of his fire and force!
Mete, and pursue one cycle of his course!
Earth and the moon, careering round the sun,
Illume each other's shadow, else how dun!
Sky-high the eagle buoys its young, and forms
To dare the zenith's blaze, and stem the storm's.
Go, trace the image of his mind and muse!
Nor yet as glass reflects, or limners use;
But as the child transmits a parent's face.
With soil and clime exotics change their race;
In bread the spirit of the corn goes forth;
And southern grapes give wine to cheer the North;
And crystals, sweeter than the spoil of bees,
Bid canes of India bloom for zones that freeze.
Each ear the reaper left is their's who glean;
And their's each flower he spurned or passed unseen.
Each day-spring has its tint, each breeze its tone,
Each cloud its shape and shadow, half their own.

Then seek the dale a bosky brook divides !
Or here, on sunny rocks the headland hides,
Unfold and bid the Italian's strain respire
With England's tongue attuned to Chaucer's lyre—
Oh, noblest instrument of thought and rhyme,
That e'er has echoed o'er the streams of time !
A lyre bards since have sounded, moon to moon,
And filled with light, till darkness blazed as noon.
Go, seize and smite it, as the morning wind,
With each response, each impulse of thy mind !
Add tint and image, vary mood and tone,
To hymn Vittorio's thoughts, or blend them with thine
own.

And, lo ! a golden palace looms in air,
With towers and balcon, gates and gardens fair.
And, past yon fount with statues, lies a lawn,
Where myrtles bower a dame, a wounded fawn.
She dims with tears her finger's guarded ring.
And who comes here, the blighted hope of spring ?
A youth, of mien majestic, haggard cheeks,
And pensive steps—What ails him ? Soft ! He speaks !

PHILIP THE SECOND.

ACT I.

SCENE THE FIRST.

CARLOS.

Is HEAVEN pleased thus? Is this the way to reign?
And these were Alva's orders? Woe for Spain!
Oh Spain! my mother, proud of wealth and worth,
And throned, the bride and arbitress of earth,
Between two seas, whose empire thou hast won,
And found new realms beyond the setting sun,
Art thou for ever doomed for priests to drudge,
And bleed for despots, whom—But God must judge.
Her despot gave me being—boon of ill!
And boon he grudges, can revoke, and will.

Here towers his palace. How superb and fair
These domes and columns stretch their necks in air !
Like prosperous knaves o'er audience they contemn :
As though 't were conscious worth thus lifted them,
Nor all things inward teemed with vice and woe,
Nor fraud and spoil made all the outward show.
Why was I summoned from the wood and wold,
That murmured to my woes and half consoled,
To tread these courts of jealousy and gloom ?
Where any door I pass may close my tomb,
And none dare mourn me, for a Father hates,
Whose smile is fortune's, but whose frown were fate's.
And where—oh pitfall, shunned as hell in vain,
Towards which they drive me as a beast is ta'en,
While all beside with hate pursue their prey,
There is, whose love, alas ! would surer slay.
There is, whom, ah would heaven, I ne'er had seen !
My once—but now my Stepmother and Queen.
Youth, youth ! thy promise is as May-day morn.
Through vales of orange trees, the vine and corn,
Life's vista opens ; wild birds warble round,
Earth blossoms ; but a shade with terror crowned

Crossed my bright path and clouded with a gloom,
That joins the hastening shadows of my tomb.
Ah, Father, sons have rights a sire should spare ;
And, King, your own blood mantles in your heir ;
And love's are ties no tyrant can untwine.
Could all earth offer you no bride but mine ?
And thou, lost Isabel, my promised spouse,
What feelings now are thine—and where thy vows ?—
Who passes yonder ? Ha ! 'tis she—'Twas not.
Mine eyes deceived me—or my dreams besot—
'Twas like. But all things fair reflect her look :
'Tis in the flower, the sunshine, breeze and brook :
Yet ne'er like this in woman—Am I mad !
'Tis she ! but oh how pale, methinks, and sad :
Yet beauteous still, beyond the rose in May,
The zephyr on the sea, the dawn of day.
She comes ! And hold, my heart, this throbbing high,
That thrills my frame as wonted. Fly her, fly !
As should a dove escape from death's decoy,
Or snake, whose looks, that fascinate, destroy.

SCENE THE SECOND.

ISABEL—CARLOS.

ISABEL.

Carlos! He saw and shunned me—as he ought.
But shunned like one he should despise, methought.
Well—so he should—Yet pity me no less.
How small my fault, how fatal its success,
None knows—And be my pangs forever hid.
But mine excuse—he should know? God forbid!
Let faith inurn, and silence seal, the past,
Deep as the grave my tears are fretting fast.
Yet let him learn deception has its close?
Learn that I Queen combine not with his foes:
Nor urge in secrecy their dark endeavour?
Learn this from me—he should—he must? Must
never.

CARLOS.

May Spain's Queen pardon my threefold offence,
In having wandered hither, hurried hence,

And thus returned, scarce conscious where I wend ;
For in this palace him, whom few befriend,
And many hate, her least complaint would sink,
Like the least impulse o'er the abyss's brink.

ISABEL.

Strange to the stern formalities of court,
I know too ill its usage, ill support,
And haply ill appreciate, to complain ;
Save when I find the courtesies of Spain
So far austerer, than the native mode
I used, ere ushered to a king's abode.
Whose heir what wrongs oppress, what foes assail,
What dangers threat—I know—and I bewail.

CARLOS.

For which he thanks you, and will bear them better.
Nor were his sorrow, gracious Queen, your debtor,
If Spain with one regret a bosom leaven,
Where all were peace, could I be heard of heaven.

ISABEL.

Whate'er my sorrows, time may be their cure.
Be thy care only to find peace as pure.

CARLOS.

My sympathy offends you?

ISABEL.

No—It nerves—
Lest mine o'erstep the bound a Queen observes.

CARLOS.

Has sympathy a bound that power can span?
It links, like light, the universe with man;
Makes every star some portion of ourselves,
And thrills the dunnest pit a tyrant delves.
Is virtue aught but sympathy and love
For all that lives, beneath us or above,
Aye, all that is—the mountain, stream and wood?
For all God's works are beautiful and good.

Men but in this each other's worth o'ercome :
They all love some one, and are good to some ;
The bad love few, and them with fervour small ;
The good love many much ; the best love all.
Let not what graces and inspires the great,
Consoles the poor, and half redeems their fate,
Be banished from a heart like yours divine,
Or stinted towards a state so lost as mine.

ISABEL.

Prize not so high a sympathy so vain.
I bear thee, Prince, no stepmother's disdain ;
Yet dared I mediate, for an injured son,
With a wroth Father——

CARLOS.

Dared ! Who dares it ? None.
And had all courage, heaven forbid you durst.
'Twould misbecome you most. Oh, fate accurst !
You, innocent source whence all my sorrows spring,
You, for my sake, to mediate with the King——

ISABEL.

Source of thy sorrows I ?

CARLOS.

Of all the source.

For all began, and headlong hold their course,
From that dread day, which joined us but to sever,
A moment joined, then parted us for ever.

ISABEL.

Ah, why recall an hour too bright to last ?
'Tis gone, far down the irremeable past ;
As snow from heaven is hurried on the breeze,
To join the bitter and remorseless seas.

CARLOS.

But my heart caught it, as in drought the shower,
Or seed on downy wings that sows the flower ;
Which blossomed with my growth, its better part ;
And rapt, like grace, and purified my heart.
My Father marked the passion, nor was wroth ;
Nay, for he never chided, nursed its growth ;

Its ripening cherished, like untimely spring,
And then—Ah! what a father! what a king!
Fulminated, like winter retrograde in power,
And withered branch and root, and reft the flower.

ISABEL.

And thou?

CARLOS.

I, pale with horror, dumb with awe,
Subject and son to him whose will was law,
Heard it, nor dared dispute, nor deigned object,
Nor answered, save by silence and respect:
But murmured to the winds, and wept apart,
And stuffed my wrongs and stifled in my heart;
In that dark cave, that fathomless abyss,
That erst o'erflowing still had room for this.
Of you what could I think, or what require?
And him I knew—my sovereign, and my sire.
Who made all his in making you his bride,
Yet left me virtue, solitude and pride.
With which I sought the mountain and the sea,
Where all was lorn and desolate, like me.

D

There I asked aid, and found it, from above,
To make life's duties paramount to love,
And bow my head, a bullock to the yoke,
Which never human heart had borne but broke.
The more grief grew my fortitude had growth;
But my stern Father's hate outstripped them both.

ISABEL.

Not hate: no father's heart can hate his son.
Suspect it may. This court has more than one
Prone to malign us, proner still to spurn,
The less we merit it or can return.
From such thy sire some prejudice has got,
But hatred? Never.

CARLOS.

Ah! you know him not.
And heaven vouchsafe you ever may ignore!
How vile the treacherous tribe that haunts his door,
How only formed to flatter and deceive,
No heart like yours can image or believe.

But he, more cruel than that treacherous tribe—
'Tis Philip hates me, spurns, and will proscribe.
All that surrounds is his who holds the throne :
Their looks, thoughts, lives, but imitate his own :
As rocks reflect the voice when winds are mute,
Or lakes the rock whose footstool they salute.
To soothe his soul in vain have I essayed.
His heart is hardened to a hangman's blade.
No touch can penetrate those ribs of steel ;
And not one chord there answers my appeal.
But I, whate'er the sire, am still the son,
And recollect his rights, though mine be none,
Yet should my wrongs and sorrows burst restraint,
And dare one day trust utterance with complaint,
'Twere not of hate paternal, injured show,
Or outraged fame, his ears should tingle—No !
My grief has deeper reach and loftier scope :
He robbed, aye, robbed my very heart of hope,
Mine eyes of light, my spirit of its fire,
My mind of health, my soul of all desire,
He robbed me—oh ! of more than youth, and life,
And heaven, the day he robbed me of my wife.

ISABEL.

Prince! Prince! what words are these? To whom
addressed?

Where breathed? And, ah! what is it they suggest?
Is he thou chargest thus so little known?
Thy sire, my spouse, Spain's sovereign and our own.

CARLOS.

Pardon! I tremble at each name——

ISABEL.

Beware!

I, too, fear Philip much—(But more his heir).

CARLOS.

Pardon my heart's involuntary throes!
Whose grief till now I never dared disclose.

ISABEL.

Thou never shouldst—I never should have heard——

CARLOS.

Hear what remains—Ah, fly not—Hear one word!

ISABEL.

■ Be mute! Release me! Leave me!

CARLOS.

I obey.

I cease—But, oh, how much remains to say!

Give me one hope?

ISABEL.

What hope is in thy thought

Unmixed with guilt?

CARLOS.

You hate me not?

ISABEL.

I ought—

If thou durst love me.

CARLOS.

Hate me then, and tell

Your spouse, my father, and our king, how well!

ISABEL.

I tell the King?

CARLOS.

If guilt in love be shown—

ISABEL.

God help me! would the guilt be thine alone?

CARLOS.

Ah! then your heart——

ISABEL.

What have I said? Too much!

As thou hast heard—Address me not, nor touch!

Fly! Leave me! Think, if pity move thy heart,

What Philip is, and what we are—Depart!

Lest both deserve all he could deem our due,

Should I hear further, or shouldst thou so sue.

CARLOS.

Nay—But one word—What heart like mine distraught,

While other arms hold all it ever sought,

Could deem more vain than venial this endeavour
To haunt the trace of treasure lost for ever :
To sate mine eyes with views of forfeit bliss,
And soothe despondence in discourse like this.
The sound of brooks where pilgrims see but sand,
The glimpses shipwrecked sailors think are land,
The convict's dream of home who wakes to bleed,
None grudges—grudge not me a vainer meed.

ISABEL.

For mercy, cease! Nor near me more remain.
The little while I live here fly from Spain!
Death's yellow flag o'erhangs the leprous soil,
And hovering birds their wattles stretch for spoil.

CARLOS.

Had I their wings, this palace is a cage,
Where bars so bind me—who shall disengage?
The attempt would add but fuel to the fire,
That bursts e'en now the bosom of my sire,

Whose hate heaps on me many a crime unknown,
Nor e'en suspects the only guilt I own.

ISABEL.

Would I knew nothing!

CARLOS.

Have I given offence?
You shall have vengeance speedy and immense.
But let it find me where I first drew breath,
And where, if sorrow drive me not to death,
My Father's rancorous enmity will drive,
For his heart vows it, and his hopes contrive.
Still let me haunt his horrible abode,
Which, since you share it, seems of heaven bestowed,
To breathe and sigh my last where you are near.

ISABEL.

No, no! I quail too much to have thee here.
Shades of thy fate already dark the day;
A knell knolls in mine ears—Awake! Away!

For the first proof and last of love exprest,
If more than verbal, grant me one request—
Fly from thy sire!

CARLOS.

Alas! it cannot be.

ISABEL.

Then fly, now more than ever, fly from me!
Go, spare at once my honour and thine own.
Go, make the wrong accusers do thee known;
Make known what courage innocence can give;
And live—'t is I conjure, command thee—live!
With me my virtue unimpaired shall rest,
With thee my thoughts, but never more exprest,
Alas! with thee, despite all self-control,
Where'er thou goest goes my heart and soul.
But lose henceforth all traces of my feet.
Care that I never hear thee more, nor meet.
No, never! Heaven alone yet knows our crime:
Hide it from earth, and all detecting time,

E

Aye, hide it from ourselves! from heart and brain
Raze root and branch, and, should it bud again,
Again uproot it, or again endeavour!

CARLOS.

What! Never hear me more? What? Never, never!

SCENE THE THIRD.

CARLOS.

She loves me still! And leaves me thus! to die.
How blest, at once, and miserable am I!

SCENE THE FOURTH.

CARLOS—PEDRO.

PEDRO.

Carlos! But, oh, how changed in sight and soul!
What cares, dear Prince, distract your self-control?
Tell them the partner of your earliest years.
Let me, who shared your studies, share your tears;
Me, whom you oft have termed your friend sincere.

CARLOS.

And durst thou re-assert that title here?
Where all its rights as rebels are proscribed;
And e'en its name, though current with the bribed,
Like gold, to buy whate'er is worth that fee,
Is never given to mendicants like me.
Let faith be sage: what could it here evince?
Fatal to thee 't were useless to thy Prince.
Turn with the tide, I prythee; watch the wind:
Go, steer thy galley where the gulf is kind!

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Strive for the strong ; the conqueror's cause espouse ;
And where all others worship, pay thy vows.

PEDRO.

Prince, in no sense are vows of mine preferred
Where others worship, though I join the herd :
My thoughts are his who will, I hope, forgive
Dissembling forms, which none may spurn and live—
Which for your sake alone my heart endures,
As for his sake my heart and hand are yours.
Here to invoke him I nor dare nor deign :
'Tis what all most usurp when most in vain.
But prove and prize me, and discern from them !
Nor be the dunghill bird that spurned a gem.
Nor choose your falchion for its sheath of guilt—
Bilboa's blades bend double point to hilt—
Say, for your cause what peril shall I seek ?
Where breathes the enemy that wrongs you ? Speak !

CARLOS.

I have but one ; his creatures I contemn ;
Nor deign distinguish friend or foe in them.

To this one foe I nothing can oppose,
But silence, nor but scorn to things like those.

PEDRO.

But truth, that never reached, shall touch that one.
Vile courtiers wrong the King, who wrongs his son.
Be mine the task to pierce the cringing crowd,
And tell truth for you to his face aloud.

CARLOS.

Pedro—what dreams! Truth enters here as air;
Like pain unsummoned, unannounced like care.
These courtiers know it, but deny with oaths,
And the King hears it, but he hates and loathes.
Whose accents shall prevail when truth's are vain?

PEDRO.

Nature's—The blood that thrills his heart and brain.

CARLOS.

His heart is granite, and his brain a fire.
Leave me to heaven to rescue from my sire.

Heaven, which sometimes lends aid to innocence,
And may, and only can give mine defence.
'Tis guilt needs human hands: if guilt were mine,
No human hand would I so seize as thine ;
Seize, as a lifeboat sped where billows bound ;
But who shall save when storms convulse the ground ?

PEDRO.

Yet let me share the fate I would prevent,
And, if I cannot baffle, brave the event.
No other part becomes me, nor can please,
In halls so haughty and abhorred as these.

CARLOS.

My fate, whate'er the event, can be but woe,
Deep as the sea, incessant as it's flow,
And heavier, oh ! than earth could e'er sustain !

PEDRO.

Divided woe is lighter borne by twain.

CARLOS.

Dearer than life within my heart it hides,
A nameless woe, which only death divides.
Never was friend more generous than thou art :
But ah ! I cannot show that friend my heart.
Now go. Can faith so ill bestowed be thrift ?
I nor deserve nor can requite the gift.
Tempt not a crime no pardon here awaits,
The crime of loving one thy sovereign hates.

PEDRO.

Such language ne'er shall change the heart it wrings :
The heart, whose dictates are supreme to kings'.
Poor Prince ! has secret sorrow pierced your breast,
With wounds you fondle, though the touch infest ;
Nor dare disclose, though who might heal them asks ?
Well, hide them—but your friend has other tasks.
Yes, other tasks for both of us remain :
Mine to serve you, and yours to rescue Spain.
Think, think what vows we made Asturia's bowers,
Where first Rome's speech and spirit kindled ours ;

Vows, to regenerate man, reform his creed,
Perfect his morals, soothe his toil and need,
Emancipate his mind, enlarge its scope,
And crush the chains of presbyter and Pope;
Till crime, and vice, and ignorance, and dearth,
And pest, and pain be banished all from earth.
Preserve your mind for destinies like these;
And be its first attempt that mind's disease.
Whate'er your sorrows tears are worse than vain.
Carlos, I here reclaim your oath for Spain;
For Spain and you reiterate my oath,
To die for either, and to live for both.

CARLOS.

Here, then, since nothing can resist thy will,
Take my right hand, oh pledge of omens ill!
To friendship fatal as my mind's disease,
And vows e'en vainer than such tears as these.
Thy destiny not mine now calls them forth,
For mine is blest in thy regard and worth;
Nor more blames Heaven, whate'er may hence ensue,
But thanks and praises for a friend so true.

Ah! happier far am I than thou, sir King!
Though empire brought thee all that earth could bring;
Power, pageantry, and fortune wait thy nod,
And names and postures only due to God;
But friendship? that thou never yet hast known:
And love? love also still is all mine own!

ACT II.

SCENE THE FIRST.

PHILIP—GOMEZ.

PHILIP.

Gomez !

GOMEZ.

My liege !

PHILIP.

Thy soul's supreme desire,
Of all earth offers, is——

GOMEZ.

Your favour, sire.

PHILIP.

Which what can warrant thee?

GOMEZ.

What won it may,
Service and silence.

PHILIP.

Prove thou both this day!

GOMEZ.

No novel office. Spain has proved ere now——

PHILIP.

Yes, of her faithful servants first art thou.
But what if here I harbour thoughts so deep,
And may need confidence so dread to keep,
I please for preface to remind us both
How much kings challenge from their subjects' oath?

GOMEZ.

Whate'er my talents shall be better known.

PHILIP.

'Tis thine can serve me now, and thine alone.
The Queen comes hither. Wait while we confer.
And weigh each word, each syllable of her.
Each slightest movement watch of trait and nerve,
Each little change of tint and tone observe.
Fix on her heart those scrutinizing eyes,
That gauge all doubt, unravel all disguise,
And oft have plumbed the fathom of this breast,
To spell it's wish, and work it, ere confest.

SCENE THE SECOND.

PHILIP—GOMEZ—ISABEL.

ISABEL.

My liege, I come, as summoned——

PHILIP.

Reason stern

That summons sent.

ISABEL.

What is it?

PHILIP.

Thou shalt learn.

Of thee could I expect— Yet wherefore fear?

Who, who should give me counsel more sincere?

ISABEL.

Counsel from me!

PHILIP.

There's none I value more.

And, if its aid was never asked before,

Deem not the cause indifference in thy spouse,
Or more mistrust than kingly care allows ;
'Twas that I spared thy tender brows the pain
Mine ache with from the thorny crown of Spain.
But day now rises pregnant with my fate ;
When cares of kin embitter cares of state,
And my sole counsellor must be my queen.
Yet stay—Some questions first should intervene.
Dread duties may conflict—as passions must—
Tell me, what tie thou thinkest most august ?
Say, for the awe and sanctity it brings,
Which name ranks first—the father's or the king's ?

ISABEL.

Both seem alike most sacred. Who can doubt it ?

PHILIP.

One who least ought—But more anon about it.
Next, tell me this, and witness God above !
Carlos my son—dost bear him—hate—or love ?

ISABEL.

My lord!

PHILIP.

I see, I scan thy feelings all.
Couldst thou list only to affection's call,
And but that virtue's voice affection's smothers,
Thy heart, towards Carlos, were — the mere — step-
mother's.

ISABEL.

Sire! You mistake — Ah! No — I mean — The
Prince——

PHILIP.

Is then dear to thee. So thy sighs evince.
And virtue still so animates thy vows,
That Philip's son is—loved—by Philip's spouse—
Parentally——

ISABEL.

My lord, you are my law,
My mould of mind. You loved your son, I saw—

At least I deemed all fathers love their son—
And I too loved him—as his sire had done.

PHILIP.

Then since thy high and heaven-tempered heart
Nor owns the fondness of a mother's part,
Nor knows the stepmother's malignant grudge,
Between that sire and son be thou the judge.

ISABEL.

What! I!

PHILIP.

Aye—Listen. Carlos was the scope,
For years, of all my counsel, all my hope;
Ere devious far from virtue's path he strayed,
My counsel mocked, and all my hope betrayed.
Have I not warned him—oh how many times!
And still excused his still repeated crimes;
Till monstrous insolence has urged their course—
Where my defence has nothing left but force.
Such crime now crowns the summit of his past,
That faith shrinks from it; kindred turns aghast;

Lips loath to name, to hear it ears decline :
A crime that makes him hence no son of mine.
But what ! thou shudderest ere the crime is told ?
Hear first, then shudder till thy heart be cold.
A land lies north, brow-beaten by the sea,
Chill, misty, dank, but mine, and dear to me ;
And long she vowed me love, and kept her vows ;
Till treason wooed her, as an absent spouse ;
And heresy, usurping heaven's own part,
As lust will love's in many a matron's heart,
Poisoned each vein of virtue at its spring,
And made her rebel both to God and king.
Arms, treasures, tears, the sweat and blood of Spain,
Have poured like torrents through that land in vain.
(Nor, though they overwhelm my diadem, shall cease,
Till that vile race learn penitence and peace ;
As learn they shall, by Heaven ! or learn to die :
The lesson faith has failed in, fire shall try ;
Death keep the peace no other monarch can,
And Hell the penance Holy Church began.)
But who can credit give, or comfort bring,
To me, unhappy sire, unhappier king,

G

Who find these rebels to the Cross and throne,
Foes, who divine and human laws disown,
Have here their convert, here their champion won,
Here, in my house, mine own and only son.

ISABEL.

The Prince !

PHILIP.

The Prince—By proofs beyond control :
The secret message, intercepted scroll,
Sedition sown broadcast throughout the court,
And, worse, the whispered menace walls report.
Judge for thyself. Lo ! Holy Church disowned,
A father outraged, king almost dethroned,
Kingdom betrayed—And what should justice wreak
On schism, on parricide, on treason ? Speak !

ISABEL.

And ask you me, me miserable ask,
To doom your son ?

PHILIP.

This moment, 't is thy task.

Award a sentence, nor severe, nor weak.
Nor fear the king, nor serve the father. Speak !

ISABEL.

I fear but justice, and serve God. On earth,
E'en God's vicegerent may see guilt in worth.

PHILIP.

Canst thou then question what thy king asserts ?
Who more than I could catch at his deserts ?
Would heaven e'en now such question could be moved !

ISABEL.

Tried and convict already ?

PHILIP.

All is proved—
But how convict a haught and headstrong youth,
Who deigns not reason, and outfaces truth ?

G 2

I feared to charge him with this last offence,
Till time had quenched my fury kindling thence.
But now Spain only speaks within my soul :
Save when there echoes, like a muffled toll,
The father's voice ——

ISABEL.

Hear, hear it! 'Tis divine—
'Tis God's and nature's. Hear their voice in mine.
Crimes past example pass belief with me :
These may be less—may have some prayer or plea.
Judge it yourself, and hear him in defence.
What charm, what strain of song or eloquence,
What flatterer's tale so wins on adverse ears,
As when a son intreats and father hears?
Princes forsooth learn pride where courtiers crowd;
But towards his king can ever prince be proud?
Ah! open him your ears, your lips unseal;
Give your whole spirit to the throes you feel;
Invite his confidence, your own impart,
And have an honest change of heart for heart.
Perhaps you seldom see him, scarce address,
Meet without smiles, and part with no caress:

Your frown may chill him, silence seem unkind ;
Or sneers perhaps strike terror through his mind.
Reserve for foes that majesty severe ;
But to your son be gentle, and be dear.
Revive his virtues, fan their faintest spark :
In Philip's heir all never can be dark.
What may not labour work where love controls ?
Or generous means not win from generous souls ?
Men form each other, and as moulds coerce.
To treat them as we think them makes them worse ;
Treat them as if already all we would,
We make of them the utmost nature could.
You think him headstrong—'Tis his youth, and rank.
You think him guilty—Who is pure ? Be frank,
And, save that God attests, o'erheard of none,
Accuse him, face to face, and sire to son.
A father's ire comes sweetened with regret.
What child but trembles when his brows are met ?
A father's tone more penetrates his heir,
Plants more remorse, and leaves less rancour there,
Than all the shafts malignity can strain,
Barbed with disgrace, and venom'd with disdain.

Let all your court perceive you love your son,
Appreciate his deserts, and count him one
By youthful ardour to excesses driven,
Which should be—censured? yes, and be forgiven.
Your court shall sudden change its tune and theme,
And laud his worth, and witness their esteem,
Till every echo with his praise intones.
Cast from your heart suspicions it disowns!
Cast vulgar terror forth for vulgar kings,
Who half deserve the fate that terror wings.

PHILIP.

Words worthy thee! and thine alone their work!
They thrill each depth where kind affections lurk,
Till all my heart-strings vibrate to thy voice.
Oh, curse of kings! whose passions know no choice,
But in the bosom burn with secret throes;
A light, we dare not follow, nor disclose;
But vainly wrest, as thieves their lantern turn,
To hide a flame unquenchable to burn.
But time now comes to liberate my soul,
And give each impulse to its own control.

Truth in thy counsel, truth enough, is seen—
(And more perhaps than thou suspectest, Queen).
The Prince is guiltless, since thou thinkest so.
Let him forthwith come hither—Gomez, go!

SCENE THE THIRD.

PHILIP—ISABEL.

PHILIP.

Now mark the father's merge the monarch's sway,
As mists that crown a mountain melt at day.
But woe! if clouds reclose the morning's path,
And the mount peal in majesty of wrath.

ISABEL.

Woe! But he comes. My presence may give pain.
I hasten hence—Permit me, sire?

PHILIP.

Remain!

ISABEL.

You have the advice you sought. My task is done.
No stepdame should now witness sire and son.

PHILIP.

Remain! Both need thy witness, and I claim.
Thou hast of stepdame nothing but the name:
And canst forget that. Wherefore should he fear?
Thy presence has its charms. Behold him here,
To learn how vast the debt he owes thee is,
For having pledged thy loyalty for his.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

PHILIP—ISABEL—CARLOS.

PHILIP.

Come hither, Prince—I fain had called thee son.
Ah, hadst thou rendered king and father one!
Or owned, if not thy king's, thy kindred's cause,
Or though thou scornest kindred's, feared the law's!

CARLOS.

Still accusations new, and still the same,
And fraught with still fresh bitterness of blame,
And met, my liege, with silence every time!
That you believe me guilty is my crime—
Which gives me, not remorse, but grief intense.
Oh, could I find the source of your offence!
Which I deem my misfortune, you my guilt——

PHILIP.

'Tis love, boy, love! Aye, startle as thou wilt—

H

Too little love for Spain, and none for me.
And prurient thirst, insatiate as the sea,
For faithless flatterers—Seek no source beyond.

CARLOS.

Then, God be praised ! I need not all despond.
If 'tis no inborn forfeit that offends,
I for all else may learn to make amends ;
More please my father, more my country prize ;
And drive those flatterers from me, faithless flies,
That for a blighted bud forsake the flower,
And leave for dearth the honey-dew of power.

PHILIP.

How young, how vain, how confident thou art !
Boy, boy, I read thy features, mien, and heart.
Hope was, maturer years might make thee sage ;
But folly's growth outstrips thy growth in age.
Still I shall charge to youth this day's offence ;
Though thy heart's depths declare it issued thence.

CARLOS.

This day's offence! What is it?

PHILIP.

Durst thou ask?

Or doubt I read thy thoughts, despite their mask?

Aye, not mere words, when who intrigue convene;

But thy heart's thoughts, through all its depths, are seen.

CARLOS.

What is 't you mean?

PHILIP.

Bear witness, Queen of Spain!

Guilt's last result is ignorance of its stain.

Vice migrates, like disease, from heart to head.

CARLOS.

Oh, Father, deign resolve a doubt so dread!

What have I done?

PHILIP.

Forsooth, misdeeds so many,

Thou doubttest which, to seem unstained of any.

What! Hast thou hatched this day no secret league,
With whom 't were monstrous, impious to intrigue?
While morn was pale, as is thy visage now,
In mine own court, my palace—Tremblest thou?
Whom didst encounter? whom didst entertain?
Whom? but—that miscreant Flanders sent to Spain,
Prayers in his mouth for mercy from the mud,
But bosom fraught with treason, spoil and blood.

CARLOS.

And are such crimes on such foundation built?
My slightest, worthiest deeds traduced to guilt?
'Tis true, I met that Fleming, where you state;
True, I bewailed with him your subjects' fate;
As with their sovereign here bewail I dare.
Nor you yourself perhaps could tears forbear,
To learn how red a scourge that race controls;
What yokes of more than iron crush their souls;
Beneath men cruel, bigoted, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of avarice, fear and lust,
Too ignorant to judge, too proud to learn.
My heart bleeds for it, and, methinks, should burn.

Would you yourself have Philip's son feel less?
Should vile or vulgar thoughts your heir possess?
Hear, sire—for why should truth and mercy fear?
Their voice in mine can wound no parent's ear—
Arrest this reckless course of sword and flame,
That desolates the land, degrades your name,
Revolts mankind, and must give heaven offence!
Send Pedro thither, or call Alva thence,
To staunch a people's blood like water spilt,
And show their king has mercy e'en for guilt.
Oh—since some say, who magnify your worth,
You reign as God's vicegerent here on earth—
If, when you judgment give of life or limb,
You have not mercy, what have you like him?
But have I dared too much, or seemed to dare?
'Tis your's to sentence, mine to hear and bear.
Whate'er my doom, this only is my claim—
Spare, Father, spare your son a traitor's name.

PHILIP.

Great, generous thoughts, in all thou utterest, shine!
But canst thou penetrate thy king's design?

Let thy young breast its sallies learn to bound,
Nor give unasked advice howe'er profound.
If fate e'er clothe thee in that empire's robe,
Whose drums pursue the day-star round the globe,
Though Spain now praise that generous fire of thine,
'Twill cost thee heartaches—blest! if less than mine.
Now to our theme. For mercy was thy plea—
And mercy thou shalt find—at least, for thee.
For others? No. Thy claim surpasses theirs.
Here pr'ythee leave me to mine own affairs.
Thine have had here an advocate, I ween,
Right hard to be denied, the Queen, the Queen!
Who deems thee worthy of my love and hers.
I but pronounce thy pardon, she confers.
Prize it the more, and merit, day by day.
Lo, lady, thus thy counsels I obey!
Thus prove my heart by thine example won,
To pardon, aye, and more, to love my son.

ISABEL.

My liege!

PHILIP.

To thee I owe it, thee alone.
'Tis thou hast calmed my wrath, and changed its tone

To mild complaint—which may we never rue.
Redeem her words, boy, her advice pursue,
Her favour win, and imitate her grace!
Nor thou, dear consort, turn from him thy face;
But still receive, still counsel, guide him still.
And hear thou her, nor shun her! 'Tis my will.

CARLOS.

Pardon? My spirit had the term disdained,
But my sire gave it, and you, lady, gained.
So fate now wills it, fate my only crime—
Fate ne'er shall shame me thus through future time.

PHILIP.

Methinks the need of pardon shames thee rather,
Than needing thus to owe it to thy father.
But go! Enough of words. Give mine good heed.
And now, fair Queen, thou mayest hence recede.
But seek thy chamber, and expect me there,
By noon. Till then the kingdom claims my care.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

PHILIP—GOMEZ.

PHILIP.

Thou heardst?

GOMEZ.

I heard—

PHILIP.

And sawest?

GOMEZ.

Saw—

PHILIP.

Suspect?

GOMEZ.

Was truth—

PHILIP.

And Philip has been fooled!

GOMEZ.

Reflect!

PHILIP.

I have reflected. Alice serves the Queen ?

GOMEZ.

Alice.

PHILIP.

Let council instantly convene.

Its rising let the Tower's intendant wait.

Then, let the all-seeing day-star speed his gait,

Night welcome him with pall from hell unfurled,

And, deep as is my purpose, shroud the world !



ACT III.

SCENE THE FIRST.

PHILIP—GOMEZ—PEDRO—GRAND INQUISITOR—
COUNSELLORS—GUARDS.

PHILIP.

Guards, to your posts! Beware none enters here.
Seniors, my few but faithful friends, give ear.
No ordinary crisis claims your aid:
But one whose shadow has my soul dismayed,
And so unnerved my lips their faltering tone
Almost denies to make this business known.
And ought I utter it? Alas! I must—
Lest Spain suspect her king betrays his trust.
My Lords, I come no longer, as I use,
To hear and judge, I come now to accuse—

Judge you ! but such a culprit none in Spain
 Would dare accuse him did not I arraign.
 What ! can my words already thus appal ?
 A murmur steals, a shudder thrills through all.
 But what a shock shall wither every frame,
 Yours to be told, and mine, alas, to name—
 The traitor—'Tis Don Carlos—

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Ha ! your son.

GOMEZ.

Spain's heir, forsooth.

PEDRO.

What crime can he have done ?

PHILIP.

Robbed me of every hope 'a son should give,
 And made it pain and bitterness to live !
 Ere autumn's frost, almost ere noon's decline,
 I live too long for his desire, and mine.

In him I never shared a father's joy ;
He shunned me, shocked and outraged from a boy.
From him no filial smile, no fond caress,
Nor duteous phrase e'er answered my address.
Him neither praise incites, nor censure fears.
Alike have served my menaces and tears :
Alike rewards and chastisements are vain :
Pardon he scorns ; and—love ? 'tis his disdain.
My features in his face I own and wonder ;
For all our feelings are as poles asunder.
A mule in intellect, a graft mismatched,
An egg of dragons in an aerie hatched—
Precipitate as night his youth has passed
From crime to crime, and reached the worst and last.
Who but has marked him yearn with thoughts supprest,
As guilt and shame were struggling for his breast ?
But I have tracked their course from goal to goal,
And seized at last the secret of his soul.
He seeks my life ! He plots a parricide !
He long has planned it, and this morn has tried.
'Twere vain to trace links endlessly involved,
By which this mystery of his mind was solved ;

For I have walked where earth before me gaped,
And fled the abyss's brink, and scarce escaped,
And seen, what seeing could alone attest,
The dirk my son has destined for my breast.
This morn, his farce of reconciliation o'er,
And pardon given and spurned, as oft of yore,
I, by the fount of Dian and her hunt,
Pursued my woodland promenade, as wont,
Alone, unheeding, and I thought unseen.
When—as I turned the alleys of the Queen—
(Oh vision! doubted then, nor trusted since,
But that Rodrigo following knew the Prince)—
I spied him—in an arbour—hand on hilt—
Ambushed to stab me! but so wrapt in guilt,
When one step more had brought me in his power,
I started back—he turned—and fled the bower—
To give his crime a new and surer shape.
When—ah! why should I, if I could, escape?
Have I not proved the worth of human pride?
Shall I live dogg'd here by a parricide?
No. Never sire should covet life's remains
Grudged by a son. 'Tis your concern and Spain's.

Consult for them. I might mistake. If not—
'Twere, oh, what scandal to divulge this plot!
And is this all? More must methinks exist.
If known, declare them, you, who here assist!
As free as air, and faithful, be your speech.
Who of you can impeach the Prince, impeach!
Whoever can defend, defend the Prince!
And heaven inspire you, and the truth evince.
A terrible task is yours, but must be done.
You judge at once your sovereign and his son.

GOMEZ.

Sire, what demands! What answer would they wring!
Betray ourselves, our country and our king?
Or plunge our daggers in a father's breast?
Spare, spare our truth so terrible a test.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Beware, dread sovereign, lest an hour be near,
When truth has accents stern as death's to hear:

And both who listens and who tells shall rue.

PEDRO.

Nay, truth wrongs none—'Tis challenged—and 'tis due.
Tell truth !

PHILIP.

The monarch listens, not the sire.

GOMEZ.

Then I will speak, and brave a father's ire.
For well I know 'tis still the Father hears.
The King's vain efforts may suppress his tears ;
Yet looks more sad than threatening have declared,
Though Carlos is accused, the son is spared.
But crimes scarce less remain, and must be told :
Crimes which you could not, if you would, unfold.
His verbal compacts with the insurgent Dutch
I pass, as trifles, since he deems them such :
But read these letters ! From his hand they came !
Which here has signed our ruin and his shame.
He treats with France ! sells France the kingdom's keys,
The walls of Spain, the barrier Pyrenees !

Sells France Navarre, sells Catalonia, sells
Ebro's left bank, and Biscay's hills and dells—
Realms, which our fathers bought with battle's blade,
As we since guarded—to be thus betrayed!
And what the price? Read here the traitor's hire!
French arms to wage this son against his sire.
Poor Spain! Even thus thy glories were to close.
So many kingdoms reft and given thy foes,
That what remain might blush and weep to own
A prince, who dared usurp his father's throne—
A father too so dowered in heart and mind,
To rule, not Spain alone, but all mankind.
Dear is your life, and sacred, sire, your crown,
And both right needed here: but Spain's renown
Is also sacred, Spain's existence dear,
Nor are these last, my liege, less needed here.
Yes, if a father and a king to slay
Be guilt's extreme—what is it to betray
A man's own honour, and his country's fate?
By your leave, sire, 'tis guilt almost as great.
The former, you, whose blood it would have spilt,
May e'en forgive: but, sire, this latter guilt?

That too may you forgive: but I, who find,
Beside all others, both these crimes combined,
I deem it mere abuse of thought and breath,
To read this traitor any doom but death.

PEDRO.

Death? Death! What is't I hear?

PHILIP.

Oh, help me Heaven!

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Who would believe it! but to me is given
To add to rebel, traitor, parricide,
The only fouler name there could betide:
Name, that appals who hears it and who tells——

PHILIP.

Ha! And 'tis then——

GRAND INQUISITOR.

The blasphemous infidel's!

K

Thou, from whose altar prophets caught their flame,
And babes sang praises when thy kingdom came,
As, were they silent, stones themselves had sung,
'Tis thou hast loosed at last thy servant's tongue—
Like which thy vengeance has too long been dumb,
But now the moment, and the cause has come,
With one dread flash and fulminating gust,
To smite thy proud and mocking foe to dust.
Me hast thou deigned appoint thy cause to plead,
And fired with courage equal to the need.
Hear then, dread sovereign of this earthly sphere,
Thus saith the King of Kings, in vengeance. Hear!
Against God's church, against his faith and truth,
Have sneers and threats come heavenward from that
youth,
Whom none should call their sovereign's son nor deem.
His impious lips incessantly blaspheme.
He scorns our creed; he shuns our sacraments;
He lauds the ritual heresy invents:
And Spain, if his, shall see her fanes defiled,
Her relics spurned, her hierarchs reviled,

Till feet profane and swinish shall have trod
Shrines of her saints, and symbols of her God.
Yes, Spain would see it, but these eyes shall not.
Though Heaven above still thundered and forgot—
Let him, who dares not sooner die, exist
For what I first will perish to resist.
Ere vulgar hands the holy veil remove
From truths men credit now nor care to prove;
Or ere that dread tribunal, type of God's,
Which here supplies and moderates his rods,
Cease, as this miscreant threats, to guard our throne,
And shame the realms where unbelief is known.
Against this rock the miscreant's threat shall fail;
And never may the gates of Hell prevail!
Most Catholic king, lift up your eyes and heart
To him, whose office is on earth your part.
To him you owe all—wealth, existence, power.
Can not his wrath consume them in an hour?
The Prince has made that wrath to vengeance warm.
Lo then! death's doom is written on his form.
Read it, nor doubt to ratify as read.
'Tis Heaven thus heaps its outrage on his head.

PEDRO.

Freedom of thought in servitude is rare ;
Nor always found where speech is free as air :
And feigned audacity at times will clothe
Vile thoughts, which else e'en servitude would loathe.
Hear one, whose courage has a different source !
Hear, sire, for once true freedom of discourse.
Forged are those letters. No such pact exists.
And the charge scarcely with itself consists.
If, sword in hand, the Prince seek parricide,
With France or Flanders why is he allied ?
Why maim the empire he would make his own,
Or share with foes an heirship his alone ?
But if he sought their foul and false support,
To make his fate less rigid here at court,
Why seek the useless parricide he missed ?
Why dare so much and in the midst desist ?
What stayed him ? If such means that object had,
They prove him, more than guilty, fool or mad.
Who knows not kings are ever watched, though loathed,
By whom their lustre, power or pelf has clothed ?

You saw the Prince? Where blameless he might be.
In ambush? That your fears alone could see.
Armed? 'Tis the mode. His hand was on his hilt?
'Twas chance, 'twas humour: charge not that to guilt.
If 'twas design, you were not in his head:
You came unseen, unheard. But then he fled?
Ah! flight perhaps you saw not, but surmise,
Or haply saw it with another's eyes.
Send for him hither: charge him with the offence:
And hear him plead and prove his innocence.
Which I till then will swear for, and be bail,
By mine own head! Is there my tenure frail?
Then by mine honour! pledge no power impairs,
Of king, or God, though all things else be theirs.
But for that charge, so dreaded soon as urged,
So easily preferred, and hardly purged,
The charge of impious aims and misbelief,
Which false zeal fulmines here—be answer brief!
The worst of crimes may wear religion's robe;
And God's own name ere now has fired the globe.
With his behoof when priests confound their own,
The storm they raise has shaken many a throne.

Schism has its texts : hypocrisy its prayers :
The blasphemy these censure oft is theirs.
Remember, sire, how boyhood proved the Prince
Prone to all thoughts the noblest minds evince.
How youth disclosed a soul with virtue warm,
And like its beauteous tenement, his form—
To answer all his father's hope conceived.
You said so once : and then the world believed.
I still believe it. Nature deviates never—
To make guilt's last extreme its first endeavour.
Has Spain not seen him suffering wrongs for years—
With what but silence, obsequy and tears ?
True, tears at times are counted fresh offence ;
There is a heart they soothe not but incense.
But you, you bear a father's, not a stone.
Assuage his tears, or blend them with your own !
Ah, think what wrongs, what misery must be his,
If guiltless, sire ; and guiltless, sire, he is.
But had he guilt, a thousand-fold the guilt
Urged by his foes, who cry—let blood be spilt !
Condemn a son to death no father can,
Nor ought, for any cause, of God or man.

PHILIP.

At length I hear and hail one human voice.
'Tis mercy pleads : and mercy is my choice.
Father I am. The father's part be mine !
My thought, my throne, my being I resign
To Heaven. God's will be done. I wait the event.
Whether 'tis his inscrutable intent
To spread, as light, delusions round my path ;
Or make my son the weapon of his wrath.
Aye, perish king, and kingdom ! Carlos live !
I here absolve him—or his guilt forgive.

GOMEZ.

What ! Make your power superior to the laws ?
Then why this council summoned to the cause ?
Could justice not be balked and we away ?
Absolve you can not—pardon him you may.
'Tis one. 'Tis well. Forgive him or absolve !
Only, this pity, sire, ere day revolve,
May prove funest——

PEDRO.

It is, it is funest.
'Tis all too strange and sudden to be blest.

But, be what may the event, the court I quit.
This council is no place where I dare sit.
I still hold honour dear, existence not.
The world shall know I never joined the plot
For innocent blood. My hands have not its stain.
Heaven knows whose have. Let who so wills remain !
I will go pray—Him, who in secret sees—
What ! Heaven alone see secrets such as these ?
Where'er I turn each glance I meet attests
All know the truth, all hide it in their breasts,
All fear, as crime, to hear it or report,
A capital crime, and unforgiven at court.

PHILIP.

Of whom, and to whom, sayest thou this thing ?

PEDRO.

Of Carlos, to his father.

PHILIP.

And thy king !

SCENE THE SECOND.

PHILIP—GOMEZ—GRAND INQUISITOR—

COUNSELLORS—GUARDS.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Father of Carlos have you proved too dear :
All see more anguish than a parent's here.
But, sire of Spain and Ind, bethink thee rather
Your subjects all look to you as their father.
Nor is the filial name less prized by them,
Than he who least deserves it dares contemn.
He is but one—their number is untold.
Is he redeemed from death? the rest are sold.
They guiltless all—who guiltier than this son?
Which will you spare? The many—or the one?

PHILIP.

Cease, cease to plunge these daggers in my soul!
I faint. Beyond my aspect and control,
Where all may both hear truth and tell nor tremble,
Let a new council instantly assemble!

L

There hierarchs of Holy Church shall come,
In whom all worldly impulses are dumb ;
Who best love truth, detect it, and declare.
With them and justice, meet ! and sentence there !
My further presence might her scales o'erweigh,
Or cost my virtue more than man's can pay.

SCENE THE THIRD.

PHILIP.

One traitor more ! Ha ! Pedro—Hast thou spied ?
No, no. But what audacity—and pride !
What words ! What thoughts ! A heart and head so
strong
Born in my reign—and living ? Not for long.
If Gomez caught my sign, ere dawn be pale,
The Holy Brethren's hounds shall track his trail.

ACT IV.

SCENE THE FIRST.

CARLOS.

Clouds have closed day with menace in their womb—
How dark ! Heaven seems the cavern of a tomb.
And night, with talons red and raven wings,
Broods o'er this horrible abode of kings.
But welcome, darkness, welcome more than day !
Though thou canst never chase my woes away,
Yet aspects vile are hidden by thy veil,
And haughty aspects, at whose scowl I quail.
Alice ? Who else could send her ? 'Twas the Queen !
And this the place and moment to convene.
For what ? Some last farewell, some fond regret—
Or—if some snare assassins may have set ?
No. All seems quiet. Peace can then sojourn,
Where conscience gnaws, and cares forever burn ?

L 2

She, parasite, still shuns the houseless head,
And follows fortune to its golden bed :
Where calm the traitor and the tyrant sleep,
While innocence their victim wakes to weep.
Yet welcome vigils, welcome tears to me !
In which I commune with my soul, and see
The one dear type of loveliness, of worth,
Of all that blossoms, all that beams on earth.
I love to haunt the terrace where we met,
And catch, methinks, her accents echoing yet—
At once my marriage bell and funeral toll.
Yet love has since lain lighter on my soul.
But bears it not a heavier burthen ? Sin ?
What means this shrinking from myself within ?
'Tis guilt ! and thus it's penalties commence.
What have I done ? Wherein is mine offence ?
Declared—what who could feel and not declare—
Love—But for whom ? Ah, Jesu ! Who comes there ?
Alice ? No. What !—Men—bearing torch and brand—
And here one steals before them—Brigand, stand !

SCENE THE SECOND.

CARLOS—PHILIP—GUARDS.

CARLOS.

Oh heaven! My Father—backed with sword and torch!

PHILIP.

What, what dost thou, by night, before this porch,
Alone, and armed? And whither was thy way?
And whence thy summons? Speak!

CARLOS.

What can I say?

Down at your aspect drops to earth the sword
Fear raised between me and that threatening horde.
Is this your suite? Deal with me as you please,
But spare us both pretences such as these.
A king, methinks, should spurn at all pretence,
And no king's son so challenged deign defence.

PHILIP.

Presumption ! foul, and oh precocious weed,
Of a rank soil, which sins to fatness feed !
Why make sarcastic deference veil thy pride ?
These ironies nor edge its aim, nor hide.
Disdain defence, ere challenged, if thou wilt—
On ! That is nothing—Come, proclaim thy guilt !
Confess and vaunt thy traitorous intent :
Give all the venom of thy heart its vent :
Exult, 'twere worthy thee and thee alone,
And thy whole crimes magnanimously own !

CARLOS.

Sire, sire, these insults sting me to the core.
Command, condemn, but outrage me no more !
So shall I bear whatever you design,
And cry—God's pleasure and the king's be mine.

PHILIP.

A cloak ere worn moth-eaten is thy type :
And fair fruit rotten from the heart ere ripe.

Where learn'dst thou thus to brave a monarch's might?
And taken in the fact to face the light?

CARLOS.

Born in your house——

PHILIP.

My sorrow and disgrace.

CARLOS.

Appease the sorrow, and the shame efface,
Both at a blow, and massacre your son!

PHILIP.

Call thee not mine!

CARLOS.

What is it I have done?

PHILIP.

Done! Durst thou thus interrogate thy king!
Hast no remorse! Or has remorse no sting,

Except when parricide misdeals its blow?

CARLOS.

What is't I hear? What! parricide? No. No.
None dares impute it; and you could not credit.
Have you one proof, one reason, why you said it?

PHILIP.

Were proof else wanting, ample here is seen;
Thy rebel tongue, and insolence of mien.

CARLOS.

Oh Father, Father, madden not my mind,
To pass those sacred bounds by Heaven assigned,
The king and subject, sire and son, to sever.

PHILIP.

Bounds, thou forsooth hast heeded? Never, never.
But cease this pompous phrase, and swelling tone,
Of virtuous pride, so little like thine own.
Speak as thou art, and what thou art. Repent!
Name and renounce thy crime, and crime's intent.

Come! let no shame-faced fear thy tongue encase :
Am I less generous, ha ! than thou art base ?
Own all, and hope all : but shouldst thou dissemble,
Or dare keep silence, tremble ! traitor, tremble !

CARLOS.

Constrained I speak—and truth shall have its scope.
Father, I know you better than to hope,
And me too well to tremble at your power.
My life is yours : you gave the luckless dower—
Take, if you grudge, I never prized the thing.
But honour ? No : I do prize that, sir King.
That still is mine, of all I once possess :
You never gave me that, and ne'er shall wrest.
No false accuser merits more the scourge,
Than he who owns what false accusers urge.
Immure me ! chain ! let racks exhaust my breath !
No boon of life, no agony of death,
Shall make me stoop to infamy so great,
As e'en to weep, save, Father, for your fate.

M

PHILIP.

Insolent wretch ! This language to thy king ?
And this the account of crimes thou hadst to bring ?

CARLOS.

Crimes, sire ? Your hatred is mine only guilt.
But blood a monarch covets must be spilt :
Though power despotic is his only right,
Which all my wrong is weakness to requite.

PHILIP.

Arrest him, guards !

CARLOS.

The tyrant's answer still.
Lo, here are hands your manacles to fill !
And for your dagger here a heart to burst !
Why pause ? What, are these cruelties your first ?
Alas ! your reign is written day by day
In tears, in blood ——

PHILIP.

Away with him, away !

And chain to ringbolts in the dungeon's cell,
Whose blind trapdoor uplifted yawns to hell.
And woe! who pity shows in look or word.

CARLOS.

Fear not. In that your slaves are like their lord.

PHILIP.

Begone! Hence! Hurry him, with main and might!
Drag—neck and heels—off—headlong—from my sight!

SCENE THE THIRD.

ISABEL—PHILIP.

PHILIP.

Well done!

ISABEL.

Good God! What is it I have seen!

Ah, my liege Lord!

PHILIP.

How now! What ails the Queen?

ISABEL.

A cry of anguish thrilled your courts throughout,
And terror answers——

PHILIP.

There was noise, no doubt.

ISABEL.

And men at arms have hurried hence—some one?

PHILIP.

E'en so.

ISABEL.

The Prince?

PHILIP.

Aye—Carlos.

ISABEL.

Your poor son?

PHILIP.

Has that so paled our Consort, so unnerved?

ISABEL.

Paled me?

PHILIP.

Good reason! love, that never swerved,
Nor shrunk, from him who won thy virgin vows.
But cheer! No peril now besets thy spouse.

ISABEL.

Peril! Ah, what?

PHILIP.

The last and worst, good wife.

But after this my life is safe.

ISABEL.

Your life?

PHILIP.

So dear to thee—is safer—after this.

ISABEL.

The culprit——

PHILIP.

Has his due, nor more shall miss.

Fear not my heart may melt again. 'Tis rock!

To stem the tempest, and the wreck to mock.

Truth now is all I see, alas too clear!

And the stern voice of justice all I hear.

ISABEL.

But what was plotted ?

PHILIP.

Not alone my fate,
But—if he viewed us both with equal hate,
The wretch, whose hands in parricide were rud,
Had mixed his stepdame's with his Father's blood.

ISABEL.

My blood ! What mean you ? But the Prince——

PHILIP.

Ingrate !

My love—like thine—has lingered there too late.
Let that suffice. These cares of state resign !
Leave me to make thy happiness and mine.
And leave the guilty to the law's decree :
And merry be the mood I leave with thee.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

ISABEL.

What looks! What words! My senses scarce return.

Perchance? No—that he never could discern.

My heart has ever hid, and hides it still,

Where fixed his fiery eyes in vain to thrill.

Yet spoke he not of happiness—and love?

Ah—named I Carlos? Save me, saints above!

My blood runs cold: strange horror thrills me through.

Where has he gone? What is there I should do?

Follow? My feet are rooted to the ground—

And my strength fails as smitten with a swoond.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

GOMEZ—ISABEL.

GOMEZ.

Pardon! My master?

ISABEL.

Hence this moment went.

GOMEZ.

Where—I must seek—and tell him the event.

ISABEL.

Event? Stay! What?

GOMEZ.

He must himself have told—
He looked for judgment dread as could be knolled?

N

ISABEL.

No. He but darkly menaced crime and doom,
As a cloud mutters.

GOMEZ.

But he hinted whom?

ISABEL.

The Prince——

GOMEZ.

Just so. The Council now agree,
And have decreed——

ISABEL.

What Council? What decree?

GOMEZ.

Spain's. And their sentence darks the scroll I bring—
For, all it lacks, the signet of the king.

ISABEL.

Its purport?

GOMEZ.

Death.

ISABEL.

Death! God in heaven forbid!

For what?

GOMEZ.

The king concealed that?

ISABEL.

He—He did.

GOMEZ.

For parricide.

ISABEL.

Woe! miserable Prince!

Who dared accuse him?

GOMEZ.

Who could best convince.

N 2

His sire.

ISABEL.

His sire! What cause, what proof, had he?

Ah! here is mystery deeper than the sea.

His real crime?

GOMEZ.

His real crime, fair Queen?

How can I name it, if you ne'er have seen?

'Twould cost me life.

ISABEL.

Thy life? Fear nothing. Say!

What is 't? Could I entrap thee? I betray?

GOMEZ.

The King, the King's betrayed, though I be mute.

But whence your ardour to explore this suit?

ISABEL.

Ardour? A woman's curious will—no more.

GOMEZ.

'Tis scarcely worth your trouble to explore.

The Prince no doubt has perils, and may fall.
 What's that to you? What is he, after all?
 A stepson. Yours would be such decent woe,
 And timely solace, as stepmothers know.
 His fall can harm you nothing; might assist:
 Might raise your offspring to the hopes he missed.
 Hear me! One source of his offence, I ween—
 Is——

ISABEL.

What?

GOMEZ.

Love.

ISABEL.

Love?

GOMEZ.

That Philip bears the Queen.
 He hated her whose features Carlos shares,
 And fain would find your image grace his heir's.

ISABEL.

(I breathe). But what is this thy words suppose?
Durst deem me base enough for thoughts like those?

GOMEZ.

I durst name thoughts to which your husband clings.
Mine are—no matter what—but not the King's.
Yet——

ISABEL.

Oh! what credulous hopes my soul beguiled!
'Tis then too true—The father hates the child?

GOMEZ.

So ignorant still of whom you are the bride?
Unhappy Queen!

ISABEL.

In whom can I confide?
In thee?

GOMEZ.

E'en me. For finding now your worth,
I burst the bond that humbled me to earth,

And speak. Prince Carlos has no crime but one—
To be——

ISABEL.

Be what?

GOMEZ.

His horrible father's son.

ISABEL.

My blood runs cold.

GOMEZ.

Mine freezes while I speak.

And whence the unnatural hate the King would wreak?

Envy. The son has virtues pure and sage,

That turn their semblance in the sire to rage.

He feels himself the contrast of his boy,

And, desperate to surpass him, would destroy.

ISABEL.

Unnatural Sire! But oh that Council's guilt,

By whose decree the innocent blood is spilt!

GOMEZ.

What council can resist a king like this?
He brings the charge himself: 'tis false, we wiss—
But mute we tremble, and assume it true.
In vain we inly shame, or after rue.
Our hearts with horror fill, our lips with lies.
Vile tools, which e'en who uses must despise!
Drones of the bee-hive, poppies on a hill,
Mere noise and smoke the nuisance of the mill,
With tinsel pomp, and epithets of pride,
And reckless waste our worthlessness to hide,
We shudder, and obey. Resist who dares?
He joins the victims whom he vainly spares.

ISABEL.

What words are these? They stun me and confound.
Is this Spain's court! Can no resource be found?
'Tis murder——

GOMEZ.

Well in wiles is Philip versed,
And holds of all hypocrisy the first.

Expect great grief, great sympathy displayed :
 Doubt oft professed ; decision long delayed.
 But fools ! who trust his pity or distress,
 Or deem delay can make his vengeance less.
 As well believe 'tis weeping melts the rock,
 Where trickling dewdrops petrify a block.

ISABEL.

And if thy bosom be less changed to stone,
 Nor like the lord's whose secret thou hast shown,
 Gomez, have pity !

GOMEZ.

What can I ?

ISABEL.

Canst not——

GOMEZ.

Shed tears in covert as I pass the spot,

o

That guards from further wrong the innocent dust.
No more.

ISABEL.

Oh fate! how dreadful! how unjust!

GOMEZ.

Could sacrifice of mine redeem the youth,
Glad would I perish—God, attest my truth!
Remorse pursues the confidence of kings;
And Philip's friendship like a scorpion stings.
But——

ISABEL.

If remorse possess the stings that seem,
Thou may'st assist the Prince, may'st e'en redeem,
Nor sacrifice thy life, nor risk thy fall.
Make ready means of flight, unknown of all!
Who need attest them? Who can then betray?
The King suspects thee least, and oh! one day
Must, as he ought, appreciate what is done
To save at once his honour and his son.

GOMEZ.

If I dared do it, and those means supplied,
Would Carlos use them? Recollect his pride!
His pride will kindle up, as flax inflamed,
To hear his flight proposed, and sentence named.
The indomitable mind will hail it's doom.
As honour's call, and glory in the tomb.
Add, that he loves me not, disdains my aid—
And might, poor Prince! suspect himself betrayed.
He thinks me like the King.

ISABEL.

No bar but this?
Methinks 'tis mine such scruples to dismiss.
Come! let me see him. Guide me to his cell.
Pause not! Its access who can give so well?
E'en I must soothe him and resolve on flight.
Prepare the means! We must not lose the night.
An hour or two that fatal scroll delay!
Perhaps the King expects it not till day.
Come! Time and Heaven propitious wait the deed.
Good Gomez, serve us, save him, aid me, lead!

GOMEZ.

Who could refuse an office so divine—

Who dare accept? Whate'er the risk—tis mine!

On! then, with me—and Heaven its succour give!

Can Heaven let perish aught so meet to live?



ACT V.

SCENE THE FIRST.

CARLOS.

What friend remains—but death ? What foe beside ?

Oh could I meet him less with shame allied !

But now, fell envoy of as fell a king,

He comes with infamy, his only sting.

Yet one doubt threatens with a keener dart :

Has the king scanned the secret of my heart ?

His cloud-compelling brows, his flashing eyes,

His agitated voice, his vain disguise,

His gait, his previous parley with the Queen,

My summons thither, her distracted mien,

And Gomez there o'erwatching each effect !

If Philip should one day his wife suspect ?

If now he doubt, and thus wreak vengeance thence ?

The Tyrant's vengeance, that precedes the offence !

No : all is hid from human ears and eyes :
E'en from our own. What, what can he surmise ?
Tears might betray me ? Or a sigh discover ?
No : can a Tyrant comprehend a lover ?
To be a barbarous and unnatural father,
Forsooth needs Philip such conclusions gather,
Or penetrate the mystery of my soul ?
As if his hate had ever brooked control,
Or ceased to urge the moment morn shall rud,
When I must sate his vengeance with my blood.
Friends of my fortune, troops, that crowded round
With vows to serve me, till my Father frowned,
Where are ye now ? Can none of you afford,
All I demand to chase disgrace, a sword ?
But noise ! The bolts unbarred ? What may this mean ?
Doors grate ! Who comes ? Hail Mary ! 'tis the Queen !

SCENE THE SECOND.

CARLOS—ISABEL.

CARLOS.

What, what has brought you, as from heaven above,
To this dark dungeon—charity, or love?
And who has access given, or entrance shown?

ISABEL.

The horrors of thy fate are half unknown.
Carlos, thou art attaint of parricide!
Thy sire accused thee, and his council tried,
Condemned, and sentenced death to be thy fine—
And now their doom but lacks the manual sign.

CARLOS.

'Twill soon be over—if that's all it lacks.

ISABEL.

What! Canst thou thus affront the hangman's axe?

CARLOS.

'Tis long since life was little worth my care.
As you know best, who heard my morning prayer,
For leave to perish where you bless the place.
The charge is dread? and dread is the disgrace:
But unexpected? No. 'Tis death draws near—
Yet, thus announced, gives anything but fear.

ISABEL.

If me thou lovest, speak of death no more!
Yield to the tempest till its worst be o'er—

CARLOS.

Yield! Would you so debase me, so degrade?
Is this the charity you came to aid?
A charge your husband sent you to fulfil.

ISABEL.

Can Carlos think of Isabel so ill,
As charged to serve his Father's barbarous soul?

CARLOS.

He might constrain you—might perhaps cajole—

Else would he suffer you to reach this room,
Alone, at midnight, and denounce my doom?

ISABEL.

Alas! If Philip knew it, woe were mine!

CARLOS.

What knows he not? And, save by his design,
Who of earth brought you through the gates you came?

ISABEL.

Gomez——

CARLOS.

Accursed, dreadful, fatal name!
Woe to us both! Irreparable woe!

ISABEL.

Ah! wrong not Gomez. He is not thy foe.

CARLOS.

I wrong him? God forgive me and defend!
Shame to me—worse than woe—were Gomez friend!

P

ISABEL.

He, he alone compassionates thy lot.
He showed me, he, the King's whole heart and plot.

CARLOS.

Oh unsuspecting, credulous innocence!
Know you not pity may be false pretence?
If the vile King's vile minion truth has told,
By truth he bought you, and in truth has sold.

ISABEL.

Nay, only prove his truth, his pity prove!
Their proof should save thee, if my tears could move.
He at my instance led me to thy sight:
He has without made ready means of flight.
Ah! lose no moment more: the gates are free:
Fly, Carlos, fly thy Father, death and me.

CARLOS.

Escape yourself, if flight have still a gate!
Leave me forever, leave me to my fate!

Too well has Gomez learned with tears to play,
And made my cell the pitfall of his prey.
Alas! the abyss is deeper than my cell!
Methinks its fathom penetrates to hell—
The King knows all! 'tis clear as noon above,
He knows the whole dread secret of our love.

ISABEL.

No, no. For that my witness be thy gage.
On thine arrest I saw him foam with rage,
And oh! with terror shook to hear him speak,
The self-same terror that now pales thy cheek:
But well I since retraced each word he said,
And found no vestige, none, of aught we dread.
He deems thine arm at both designed to strike,
And pierce my bosom and his own alike.

CARLOS.

Hard is the art, and, like it's object, vile,
To thread the gates and labyrinths of guile:
But wicked fraud your footsteps here directed;
Perhaps to prove what had been but suspected.

Howe'er that be, from this ill-omened place
Retrace your footsteps! instantly retrace!
Vain was your hope in Gomez, worse than vain,
That he who closed these portals would unchain:
And should he, worst and vainest were the hope
That I would pass a portal he could ope.

ISABEL.

And am I doomed with hypocrites like those
To drag my way-worn being to its close?

CARLOS.

E'en as Heaven wills. But hence, from hell, ascend!
For both our sakes these agonies must end.
Pity yourself! None other needs it here.
Fly, for dear life——

ISABEL.

To me can life be dear?

CARLOS.

Then for your fame's sake, and mine honour's, flee!

ISABEL.

What! In this den of death abandon thee?

CARLOS.

Yes, or share with me dangers worse than death.
Is woman's fame not blighted by a breath?
Snatch from our tyrant's heart the unholy joy
Of casting doubt on worth he would destroy.
Go now, conceal your tears, your sighs suppress!
Be queenlike; struggle with your soul's distress;
And form a fearless front, and bearing cold,
To hear the story of my suffering told.
Thence dedicate your days to toils divine,
Those few and evil days surviving mine.
And, should grief need such solace for support,
One sage yet lives amidst this impious court,
Pedro, you know him and may secret see,
And mingle tears with his, and talk of me.
Now, ere I lose all self-control, depart!
This long adieu by piecemeal rends my heart.
Go, fly me! leave me! and farewell for ever!
No less than all my virtue's last endeavour

Can brace my soul, and recompose my brow,
To brave the hour of death —

SCENE THE THIRD.

PHILIP—ISABEL—CARLOS.

PHILIP.

That hour is now!

Now—wretch! I strike it.

ISABEL.

Fiends!

CARLOS.

’Tis welcome still.

ISABEL.

Gomez—Iscaiot!

CARLOS.

Give me death!

PHILIP.

I will—

But accents first more terrible to bear.
I know all! all! flagitious, impious pair!
The horrible flame, that you with love consumed,
And me with madness, as it burned illumed:
With oh what pangs to smother and devour!
Till here at last it casts you in my power.
Why should I count my wrongs, or rail at fate?
Revenge! revenge! I have it, and will sate,
As man ne'er heard of, and shall quail to name.
But let mine eyes first revel in your shame.
Think not my transports from affection spring:
I never loved thee, faithless, worthless thing!
No, Philip's love is great, and soars apart,
Nor deigns place vile and vulgar, like thy heart.
Nor am I jealous, nor of slights afraid:
No dame, that e'er deserved me, e'er betrayed.
'Tis not thy lover, 'tis thy King complains.
'Tis that his consort's honour, 'tis that Spain's
Has been defiled. Restore them unimpaired—
Thy love was never prized, and well were spared.
For faith and fear should so have filled thy breast,
No place was left there for that wayward guest.

Thee, vile seducer, shall I deign address?
Thee every crime becomes, and this no less—
Which damning proofs have long ago made plain;
Sighs, mutual blushes, glances stolen in vain,
The faltering voice, the palpitating breast,
And the dumb grief your impious hearts suppress—
I saw them, and I see. What more remains?
Your crimes were equal: equal be your pains!

CARLOS.

What is't you mean? She's guiltless, blameless—hear!
Pure of all fault, of e'en its shadow clear!
Pure, as the morning cloud to heaven aspires,
And proof as adamant to earthly fires.
My oath in death her innocence shall own.
To her my fatal passion scarce was known.
The offence——

PHILIP.

Was common: and how far each dared,
I know: and know thou hadst not yet prepared
The audacious thought, the damned design, to wrong
Thy Father's bed—Or hadst thou lived so long?

But from thine impious lips the horrible word
Of love has passed—I know it—and she heard.
There needs no more.

CARLOS.

Still, mine was all the crime.
I keep back nothing. Hope—a moment's time—
A falling star—a meteor—flashed to sight;
But her stern virtue made it instant night.
She heard, but heard to shame me and control,
And chase the unholy thought that fired my soul.
Unholy now but once a flame divine!
She was—you knew it, for you made her—mine,
By better right, than reft her from my vows.
My love pursued her, though you pleased espouse;
If changed to guilt, 'twas yours that change to make.
You took her from me—what remains to take?
Make me the victim of your pride and rage:
And let my blood your jealous thirst assuage.
But she is guiltless—Spare and set her free!

PHILIP.

She yields in courage, not in crime, to thee.

Q

Woman! whom cunning has the while made mute,
But silence owns, what words can ne'er confute,
Thou hast defiled the temple of thy mind,
With thoughts, which, uttered, would revolt mankind.
I read them, read as written in a scroll,
When I to tempt sought counsel of thy soul.
My son, forsooth, my son I must recover?
Perfidious dame, thou durst not say thy lover.
Thy heart, like his, from every tie has swerved,
Betrayed all sanctions, and all doom deserved.

ISABEL.

Nor fright, nor craft, nor conscience made me dumb:
But horrors stunned my brain, and still benumb,
To view, unveiled, and all disguise apart,
Your monstrous, ravenous, hypocritical heart.
At length my stricken spirits rouse within,
And rally to my tongue. It was a sin—
A sin 'tis time I expiate with my life,
'Twas a great sin in me to be your wife.

But you—your son and God's attest my vow !
I never wronged, in deed or word, till now.
Though my soul's secret in its last recess ——

CARLOS.

Hear not! She knows not what her words express.
Pity perverts them. Grief distracts her brain.

ISABEL.

Poor Prince! thou strugglest hard for me in vain.
But time is past for palliatives to fate.
'Tis time to fly a presence which we hate,
With pains of which no torture else compares—
Fly, where he neither can pursue nor dares.
Were love a tie the tyrant understands,
Sire, I would say, 'twas you first joined our hands :
Our childhood erst was joined, and joined the hope
Of those bright visions youth begins to ope,
When summer's stream through wood unbounded winds,
And the soul seeks its mate, or never finds.
There—then—began the love you bade begin.
'Twas virtue then : who made it since a sin ?

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Those ties of years who severed in an hour?
Ah, easy task to arbitrary power!
But lovers' hearts so joined are hard to sever.
In mine his image lay consuming ever:
But, from the hour that bound me to your crown,
Lay stifled, smothered, quenched, if tears could drown.
Nor needed more, to blot it from my heart,
Than time, my virtue's and perhaps your part.

PHILIP.

Mine be it then! I will, since time can not,
Nor all thy tears and virtues, I will blot,
And quench it in your blood. Your blood shall drown
Your flame, guilt, grief, and infamous renown.

ISABEL. . . .

But not your thirst, though infinite the flood.
No. A king's hands must ever reek with blood.
But ah! could love leave Carlos for their clutch?
You differ: vice and virtue scarce so much.
Behold! your aspect used to make me tremble:
I meet it now nor quail. I used dissemble

My sinful passion, for it seemed a sin :
But having seen what yours conceals within,
I find mine pure, as heaven-descended snows
On banks, where black as Styx a torrent flows—
And vaunt I love him, and, if death his doom,
Would spurn your throne to join him in the tomb.

PHILIP.

Oh both well worthy of each other there !
Oh confident to vaunt, incestuous pair !
Proof now remains, if both of you have nerves
To bear as boast, and bear as each deserves.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

GOMEZ—PHILIP—ISABEL—CARLOS.

PHILIP.

How now? What, Gomez! Is that business o'er?
My sign was seen?

GOMEZ.

The traitor is no more.
From Pedro's heart this dagger has its stains.

CARLOS.

Pedro!

PHILIP.

Well done! A traitorous pair remains.
'Tis warm—But wait, and witness with thy dirk,
What echoes here shall emulate its work.

CARLOS.

How many deaths already have I passed!
And Pedro's too? I long to meet my last—

To leap life's battlement, and sound the sea,
To him, whose only crime was truth to me :
Or leave at least this earth, this tiger's cage ;
Thrice happy could my blood appease his rage.

ISABEL.

There needs not that. No tiger rends his own.
No, let me be the victim, me alone.
Of all your sorrows the sole source am I.
I brought death hither, and alone should die.

PHILIP.

Cease! cease this braggart babbling. Spare your breaths
For their last effort, instant choice of deaths.
Choice of this—drug—or dagger—instant make !
And first, thou death's despiser, touch and take.

CARLOS.

Warm from my friend, most welcome master-key,
Deliverer, dagger, hail ! and set me free.
For you, whose lips have dared too much to live,
Choose you that easier death the drug may give.

'Tis the last counsel ill-starred love bestows.
Collect your fortitude ! your thoughts compose !
The guiltless soul scarce needs a moment's prayer :
Nor are your duties now to learn but dare.
Take mine example—look ! 'Tis done. I die.
The poison—Seize it—Speed !

ISABEL.

I come. I fly.

Death ! my sole joy——

PHILIP.

Away then ! Thou shalt live.

Aye, live—despite thee.

ISABEL.

Death too much to give ?

For pity ! Carlos dead—and I exist ?

PHILIP.

Thou shalt not die while sorrow can persist.
Death be my ward to keep you twain apart !
Thy lingering grief shall daily soothe my heart.
Till when tears fail, love withers, and life's breath
Again grows precious, then thou shalt have death.

ISABEL.

What! I support existence at your side?

No. Death! this instant, death! In vain denied——

The dirk——

PHILIP.

Forbear!

ISABEL.

I have it! I am free!

I perish! I escape!

PHILIP.

What is't I see?

ISABEL.

Two suicides, whose death your doom has done,

Slain at your feet, your innocent wife and son.

PHILIP.

My wife's mad act no doom of mine enforced.

Her I may heal——

ISABEL.

Avaunt! We are now divorced.

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Already death dissolves our marriage vows.
This hand is free—and Carlos is my spouse!

PHILIP.

Part them!

ISABEL.

Heaven joins us, earth no more can sever.
Nor thou, earth's vilest atom, dare endeavour!
Thou, on whose clay that monster's hoof has trod
Its likeness—lest I dying crave of God
A curse shall make thee sleepless in thy grave.
Come, my first love! thou beautiful, and brave!
To clasp thee, kiss thee now gives none offence.
The gates are free—Night thickens—Let us hence——

PHILIP.

To where ingrate and faithless souls are driven!
Down! where incestuous sins hear judgment given!
Earth's doom is done. They mock not me again.
So pass God's enemies and Spain's!

GOMEZ.

Amen!

PHILIP.

Miscreants! I spared their forfeit half its fine;
Nor wronged the law—whose sentence speaks in mine.
Yet whence this blood? What streams come hither still!
Well! Now my vast revenge has had its fill—
Or reached its limit—Which that pair has past.
She dies—And he—That struggle was his last.
Oh! strange, strange look!

GOMEZ.

His eyes are fixed——

PHILIP.

On me!

Cover his face. Nay—Let thy dagger be.
Well! There they sleep—Will mine be calmer rest?
Ah! be what may their future, am I blest?
The Holy Brethren? Yes—Inquire who dare!
His eyes still haunt me with that sorrowful glare—
Cover his face. E'en rumour might suffice—
Her faith too faltered. Still those ghastly eyes!

Cover his face—How oft hast thou been told ?

GOMEZ.

His face was each time covered many a fold.

But her——

PHILIP.

Her sleepless grave thy soul appals.
That look, that piteous look will pierce the walls !
And like my shadow chase me to the grave.
One spectre more— For me to bear—and brave.
Raise that trapdoor ! 'Tis their sepulchral stone.
Thou tremblest ? Well ! Return and do it alone.
And, Gomez, Spain must ne'er suspect this scene.
Let Holy Church arrest both Prince and Queen.
Come—Bring the keys. Make thou that rumour rife !
And guard my honour and—if well—thy life !

T H E E N D.



